

HOUSE RESOLUTION 162

By Camper

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Reverend Marilyn Sasportas Robinson on being named one of the 12 Most Outstanding Women in Ministry.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy individual is Reverend Marilyn Sasportas Robinson, who has been named one of the 12 Most Outstanding Women in Ministry by the Memphis Inter-Denominational (MID) Fellowship, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the MID Fellowship recognizes the importance of honoring those women who have demonstrated excellence in their respective fields; the women recognized are judged on the basis of being a Woman of Faith, a Woman of Prayer, a Woman of Good Works, a Woman of Dedication, and a Woman of Leadership with the Courage of Esther; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the MID Fellowship requested nominations of Memphis and Shelby County women who are graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and, subsequently, selected twelve outstanding women; and

WHEREAS, a native New Yorker and current Memphian, Reverend Marilyn Robinson graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard-Radcliffe College and earned her Master of Public Health degree from the Yale School of Public Health; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Reverend Robinson began her impactful, progressive career in ministry; when her husband, Reverend Kenneth Robinson, M.D., was appointed Pastor of St. Andrew AME Church in Memphis, she left her position as an Associate Administrator at Vanderbilt Medical Center to begin the work of rebuilding the church alongside him; and

WHEREAS, first serving as a member of the ministerial staff, Reverend Marilyn Robinson became Assistant Pastor and then Co-Pastor, before receiving an unprecedented joint appointment with her husband as Pastor of St. Andrew eight years ago, making her the only woman to receive a pastoral appointment to a First Church in an Episcopal District in the AME denomination; and

WHEREAS, a true trailblazer, Reverend Robinson also became the first African-American administrator at St. Francis Hospital when she took on the role of Senior Vice President, in which capacity she was responsible for marketing, governmental affairs, customer relations, and the hospital's external communications; additionally, she supervised Pastoral Services, initiated Black history programs, and advocated for the hospital to recognize Martin Luther King Day as a paid holiday; and

WHEREAS, though she is now retired from pastoring and from St. Francis Healthcare, she continues to serve on the Executive Board of her local Women's United, as Vice Chair of the Board of the Circles of Success Learning Academy, and as a member of the boards of the Greater Memphis Women's Foundation and several other Memphis organizations; and

WHEREAS, she has further devoted her time and talents as the founder and coordinator of ReadingWorks, a community-focused ministry of St. Andrew AME Church; the program provides children in the South Memphis area a safe place to read and learn and offers a selection of more than 2,000 books that may be read on site or checked out; and

WHEREAS, a breast cancer survivor herself, Reverend Marilyn Robinson is also an indefatigable advocate for breast cancer awareness among African-American women; she has spoken at various breast cancer events and organized teams to participate in fundraising walks; and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that Reverend Robinson be recognized at this time; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we congratulate Reverend Marilyn Sasportas Robinson on being honored by the Memphis Inter-Denominational Fellowship, Inc., as one of the 12 Most Outstanding Women in Ministry of 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.